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You broke from her; and then, when she rushed after you, you struck her down with one blow of your stick; then, finding she still lived, you struck her again and again. She states that it can all be easily proved; for a lady, hearing her cry, came upon the scene, saw the last blow, and when she recognized you,

Constable Merton was able to make this long speech without interruption, for Guy had staggered back, and leaned, breathless and aghast, against the black mantelpiece of the hall.

Was he mad? Certainly that seemed

the easiest explanation of it all.

The world appeared suddenly changed.

"Mr. Merton," he said, after a moment, "this false and cruel charge can and must be disproved. Let not my aunt know the real cause of my leaving home. I will tell her that it is magis-

He rang the bell, and a man servant appeared with suspicious alacrity.

"Porter," said Guy, "bring some wine, and tell Mrs. Geoffrey that I am called over to Deepford on business connected with the murder in the wood."

His aunt, Mrs. Geoffrey, came out herself with the wine. "Ah! Good evening, Mr. Merton," she

said; "this is a very sad affair! Must

Mr. L'Estrange really go to-night?" "Yes, ma'am, it is very important," said the constable, while readily accept-ing the wine offered; Guy himself drank off two glasses in feverish haste, "You

"Oh, it's all right; you needn't ex-plain," cried the master of the park. "Good night, aunt; don't sit up for me.

I may be very late." When he reached the place where the wounded woman lay, she just had time to repeat her story, to recognize and identify Guy as her husband and her as-sailant, and then she fainted. Since then she had not recovered consciousness. III.

On the next day, as others had expected, May Fielding was too prostrated by grief to leave the house.

One of the servants was dispatched to be present at the magisterial examination; but long before he returned Mr. Armstrong rode over on horseback.

He was received in the drawing room by Mrs. Raymond and Clare, who seemed to have quite recovered her usual placid-ity and calm, though she exhibited signs of interest as the lawyer entered hur-

He glanced anxiously round the room as he entered. "Where is Miss Fielding?" he asked.

"I trust she is not ill." "She is quite prostrated with grief, 1 am sorry to say," replied Mrs. Raymond

anxiously: "but what news do you bring us, good or bad?"
"Well, it is very much as I anticipated, except in one particular," said Paul

Armstrong. "There was a mere formal examination, for the injured woman quite lost her senses before morning, him at once as her husband by some marks upon his arm. She was too far gone to say exactly what she meant, but one of the attendants caught the word "dagger," and there is certainly on his arm the mark of an anchor and a dagger very plainly tattooed."

"That may be only a coincidence," said Mrs. Raymond. "But what does he

"By my advice he said nothing," said the lawyer. "We simply plead 'not guilty, declare the charge to be preposterous, and await the moment when this woman shall make the full declaration against us."

And from sheer force of habit the law yer lapsed into the dry business tone he adopted in speaking to his general list of clients, or when instructing counsel. "I have no hopeful message, then, for May?" said his hostess, who was anxious chiefly on her account, and did not seem to dare to face the wistful, yearning eyes

without some word of comfort, "Well, yes," said Paul Armstrong, with a smile, "You can tell her that Guy is in excellent spirits; that he treats the affair with scorn, and is quite prepared to face it in every way. 'Teli May,' he said, as I left him, 'that she must bear up. It is only a postponoment of our happiness.""

He chanced to glance at Clare as he spoke, and what he saw there threw a new light on the subject; he saw the vengeful gleam of her eyes, the sudden rush of color to her cheeks, to be suc-

ceeded by a deadly pallor.

"Oh, the wind sets in that quarter, does it?" he said to himself. "I begin to see daylight now. She knows something, and is going to use her knowledge as a trump card."

"Well," he said aloud, as he rose to go, "be sure and give my message to Miss Fielding, and tell her on my behalf that she has every reason to be cheerful. 1 look upon the whole thing as a trumped up affair-a bubble that must soon burst when put to the test."

"It is best not to be over confident," said Clare, with a glance of meaning in her dark eyes.

"No, we lawyers are never that," said Paul Armstrong. "Fear not, Miss Ray-mond, Guy L'Estrange shall not suffer through that. I shall search out every atom of evidence, for and against. If you have any to give, pray let me know it at once."
"I do not understand you," she said,

rising, "I fancy I hear May's bell, Good day, Mr. Armstrong," and she quitted the room.

As she did so the lawyer plucked up courage. "Mrs. Raymond," he said, "your

daughter's manner puzzles me. Do you think she knows anything, and is keep-ing it back from feelings of delicacy or

or-otherwise?" The last word was stammered out instead of the condemnatory expression

which rose to his lips.

Mrs. Raymond looked simply aston-

"Really, Mr. Armstrong," she said "you must be dreaming. Clare is very much upset, of course, at the turn events have taken, but she knows nothing more Notice the label on your paper and than she has heard from you. She has see if your time expires this month. had no opportunity."

"Ah! said the lawyer, "I thought slie might. But you see we men of the law catch at a straw in a case of this kind. I don't quite see my way clear yet, of course; but it must come right in the end. Tell Miss May that," He shook hands with Mrs. Raymond and left her with his usual placid smile,

and with more than his accustomed gayety of manner.

He had studied the tortuous lines of

human character all his life, and he felt sure that Clare Raymond held some se If she was working, or was about to

work, against Guy L'Estrange, what was her motive for such action? That was the question which Mr. Armstrong put to himself, and there could be

but one answer. Jealousy! He determined, at any rate, to sound Guy on the subject.
Guy was taking the whole matter very

well, considering all things.

But he could not help being alive to the fact that his was a position of great

The evidence at present was dead The evidence at present was dead against him in every way.

The very fact of the marks upon his arm having been spoken of by the woman without her having had a chance of seeing them, was strong proof of the truth of her story—proof which he seemed unable to get over, even in his own mind. own mind.

Of course the whole affair was puzzle.

At least, it was thus he spoke and ar gued with his lawyer; and though Paul Armstrong, listening and looking into the open, honest face, could not avoid believing him innocent, still he was compelled to acknowledge that part of the whole position.

On leaving Raymond Lodge he proceeded at once to the prison, where he found Guy, pale and distressed, but outwardly calm.

"Well, how are they all?" he asked.
"Pretty much as might be expected," said Mr. Armstrong. "Of course, Miss Fielding feels your position acutely; but it is Clare Raymond whom I cannot understand. Her manner is so strange; she seems to be keeping some-

thing back. Have you-excuse my asking the question-have you ever given her reason to suppose that-er-that she might have occupied the position now held by Miss Fielding?" Guy glanced up at him in great sur

For a moment the question seemed to be utterly absurd.



He chanced to glance at Clare as he spoke. But in a moment there flashed across his mind a hundred things which at the time he had never observed-looks. words, remarks, the bitterness of which he had not been able to understand when

"Well," he said, "it may be so. But this I can truthfully swear; never, by word or deed, did I ever give Clare Raymond reason to think that I desired her for a wife. May has always been my choice, even from childhood."

"I fear, then, she has misunderstood you," said Mr. Armstrong; "for her manner is very strange and suggestive of some hidden agent. of some hidden secret. Let us hope it is all my fancy. And now to business."

The message of Guy to May restored her greatly, and she seemed by night time to have quite recovered her strength. At the usual time for retiring she was chatting gayly to Clare, who had been strangely reserved and silent.

At length she interrupted her. "May," she said "you pain me by these happy, trusting words of yours. I have kept silent up till now, because you were so weak and ill; but it is only just that I should speak. Give me your promise first that you will be brave, and

that you will believe that I only tell you what I do for your good." May turned very pale, but she slipped a trusting hand into that of her enemy. "Tell me all," she said; "it will be bet-

ter for me to know." "You must hope still for the best, dear," said the wily traitress, "because nothing short of utter compulsion will force words from me. But Guy L'Estrange is guilty; I saw him myself in the woods; I saw him strike the woman to the ground in his rage."

"Oh, Clare, Clare! It is not, it cannot be true!" cried May, as she flung herself on the breast of her supposed friend. "I will never believe that Guy could be a betrayer and a murderer."

"No, no, May," said Clare, pressing May's head to her breast in pretended fondness, that she might not see the vengeful glitter of her eyes, the serpent like triumph on her face; "I do not say that. I saw and spoke with Guy after it was all over, and I can relieve your heart of a great deal."
"Tell me—tell me then, I beg," said

May. "Do not fear for me. Anything is better than suspense. It is that which prostrates me and seems to rend my heart with hopeless despair."
"Listen, then, May," said Clare. "Do

not interrupt me and I will explain all. But above all remember that not a word of what I say must be repeated to any one, not even to my mother." "I promise that," whispered poor May, still nestling her aching head on the

warm bosom of her betrayer, "all shall be sacred between you and me." "Well, then," continued Clare, "I saw Guy L'Estrange strike this woman down, as I have said, and she saw me and knows that I was a witness to all. She will tell this when she recovers her senses, and they will force me to be a witness against him. But he has quite cleared himself in my eyes. That woman is not his wife nor anything to him. She never was;

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of that he has convinced me. It was all a hatched up story to extort money, but so well was it concocted that, in his horror and dismay to find that his marriage with you would be put off and all his prospects of happiness perhaps blighted forever, that he lost command over himself and struck her, never intending to deal so violent a blow."

"But it was cowardly to strike a voman at all," sobbed May. "Yes; it would have been utterly cow-

ardly and wicked had he meant it," said Clare, "but he did not do it in premeditation, and he was bitterly repentant after. He wanted to remain, and do his best to restore her to consciousness, but I persuaded him to fly while no strangers were about; and having seen that the woman was quickly recovering her senses, and hearing footsteps approaching, I confess I fled, too. It was then I met Guy again and heard from his lips the proof of his innocence of what the woman charged him with."

"What is to be done, then?" she mouned 'I wish he had not struck that woman. It seems to lower him in my eyes. Oh. Clare, if that part of your story could be

blotted out I should be a happy girl." "You do not love him, then," said Clare, gently putting her from her and rising; "if you did you would find excuses for him in his utter despair at being compelled to leave you as he feared he would. Good night, May. He sent you a hopeful, loving message. I don't think it would conduce to his well doing if he heard your doubts and complain-

ings to-night." "But stay, Clare," cried May, clinging to her; "what is to be the end of it all? If he did this thing, if that woman forces you to speak, he will be convicted."

"There is no doubt of that," said Clare; and he will be heavily punished. We must make up our minds to bear that unless one of two most unlikely things

happens."
"What are they?"

"Either that the woman dies before she recovers consciousness or that he escapes. The latter is the more improbable in these matter of fact days of well built places of detention and wide awake police. And yet such things do occur, and there is at any rate a bare possibility that he might escape. If he does he will, of course, have to fly the country." "That would be a confession of guilt," said May.

"Well, what else could he do?" said Clare; "if he remained he would simply be placed back in prison, under far more unfavorable circumstances. No. If he once escapes he must leave England, and it is very unlikely you would see him again for years, unless, indeed, you fled with him. But I must go to my room now, and you, my dear, look as if a long sleep would do you good. You must try and keep up your strength, for who knows what fresh trials the morrow may bring?"

She bent to impress a treacherous kiss on the girl's forehead, and then hastened to her own room. Here she at once began to undress, sitting the while before the mirror and

admiring the Juno like beauty she re-(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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"I think I said whether as a friend, a ister or in still dearer relation I would remember and recompense you." "You did, dear, you did; but what-" "One moment. Until the present I

"Do not think of it. I---"

refused your entreaties to bake. Today I acceded to them. But remember my yow before I put my work on the table I gave one of the cakes to Fido. Come out and see him."

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